



PDHonline Course G150 (2 PDH)

Why Standards Matter

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PDH Online | PDH Center

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WHY STANDARDS MATTER

Lesson 1- Course Overview

Topic - Description of Course

Standards are an integral part of everyday life, and yet the impact standards have on our life, society, business, and industry is transparent and generally taken for granted by almost everyone, except by those involved in the standards development process. This interactive online course synthesizes information from multiple sources to help you understand why standards are important to you, how they relate to your organization and industry, and the roles of the many individuals, organizations, and companies involved in standards development.

There are standards for the basics of life including the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, the clothing we wear, the transportation that moves us, the various communications we use, and the entertainment that engages us.

New York City, NY, September 13, 2001 -- The sun streams through the dust cloud over the wreckage of the World Trade Center.

Photo by Andrea Booher/ **FEMA News Photo**



Standards are in the news when something goes wrong, such as in the World Trade Tower Disaster. The vital importance of fire safety, escape and life safety, building codes, and design and air pollution standards are being reviewed as a result of the collapse of the Twin Towers. Another example that appeared in the news is the election reform standards that are being discussed as a result of the Florida presidential voting debacle (see American National Standards Institute (ANSI) news item, [Voting Systems Standard Released by Election Commission](#) for more information).

There are standards being created today for your cell phone and the Internet to keep pace with the rapidly changing technology. Your child's safety is ensured by automobile child seat and toy safety standards.

How are these standards developed, and why are they important to you and your organization? You may be under the impression that standards are developed mainly by government in the form of regulations, when, in fact, most U.S. standards are voluntary standards developed by industry through a democratic process. Other standards are developed through partnerships with local, state and federal governments. This course will provide examples of how standards protect your health, protect the environment, ensure your safety, and provide insight into how thousands of individuals, organizations and companies representing different industries are involved in the development of standards.

We will also demonstrate how standards promote efficiency and economy in business, and affect interchangeability and interoperability of products and parts – in the U.S. and globally. Finally, we will explore how standards provide U.S. business access to global markets (see Lesson 5).

Included in this course are a glossary of terms and acronyms, a list of important web sites, and "Frequently Asked Questions."